



NN/LM Emergency Preparedness & Response Initiative Table-Top Exercise

Scenario: Tornado Strike

Unlike a hurricane or a winter storm, tornados strike with very little warning. Since there is little warning, advanced planning cannot take place. Therefore, it is critical that the person responsible for incident response (the Incident Commander) is well-drilled in carrying out response procedures. This table-top exercise is designed to help him/her prepare for a tornado strike.

It's 7pm on a hot and muggy Tuesday evening and a huge line of storms is moving through your area. For the past three hours your area has been under a TORNADO WATCH. Off in a distance you see what looks like a funnel cloud weaving its way toward the library where you work, which is about 5 miles from your home. Suddenly, a weather announcement comes over your radio reporting a TORNADO WARNING.

Questions to consider:

Would staff have been aware of the TORNADO WATCH?

Would staff at your library be aware of the TORNADO WARNING?

What actions would they take for both the WATCH and the WARNING?

You can see by the debris cloud, that the tornado is causing major damage. You quickly realize that it's time to contact staff. You take out your cell phone and call the Service Desk, but the call doesn't go through.

Question to consider:

What is the best way to contact someone during or after a disaster or disruptive event? (Answer: text messaging.)

You finally get through to your staff. Everyone is fine, but library has suffered some damage, including large limb that crashed through one of the windows, and staff can see downed power lines. A report comes over the radio announcing that everyone should shelter in place while emergency crews assess the damage.

Questions to consider:

Do you have shelter-in-place procedures for your library?

Have you designated a shelter-in-place room in the event there is a nearby HAZMAT incident?

The director of your library contacts you to say that once it's safe, staff should close the library for the evening and go home. Due to the enormity of the situation, the director also recommends that the library be closed tomorrow, but that core services and resources should be maintained remotely.

Questions to consider:

What are your core resources and services? (Online resources, library chat, reference email, etc.) How will staff maintain these services and resources from their homes?

What ways do you have to reach your staff?

How will you communicate with your patrons about the status of the library? (Website, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

Are there any events happening in the library tomorrow that you will need to contact participants?

All your staff are safe, but the person who maintains the online journals doesn't have power. What's your backup strategy for all your core services and resources?

What if the tornado prevented communication with your director? Do you have a leadership transition plan?

What if a reporter calls the library and asks about the status of the library? Who is authorized to speak to the media?

Important Response Tool

NN/LM has created a one-page service continuity plan, which can greatly assist you in this type of situation. The plan is adapted from the CoSA (Council of State Archivists) PReP and can be found at <http://nnlm.gov/ep/disaster-plan-templates/>.